



THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER Based on the characters of EDGAR P. JACOBS

JEAN DUFAUX • CHRISTIAN CAILLEAUX • ÉTIENNE SCHRÉDER

THE CALL OF THE MOLOCH



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THE CALL OF THE MOLOCH

THE SEQUEL TO *THE SEPTIMUS WAVE*

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COULEURS: LAURENCE CROIX

Amidst the abandoned warehouses of Southwark, a plot has been hatched. Lady Rowena, Professor Evangely, and their accomplices have decided to continue the nefarious Septimus's research and are looking for his Guinea Pig – Olrik. Still deeply tormented after the Yellow M episode, the latter is in the care of Lily Sing, a ruthless, shady businesswoman, who's helping him restore his mental balance.

While a strange illness spreads through the city, Mortimer, too, is attempting to recreate Septimus's experiment – in vain. He eventually admits as much to Captain Blake, who for his part is investigating a string of bizarre incidents involving former soldiers of Major Banks's unit ... a unit whose entire roster, including the major himself, were confined to Bedlam Hospital with identical symptoms ...

Blake's investigation leads him and his assistant Millovich to the discovery of a spaceship buried deep beneath King's Cross. Meanwhile, Lady Rowena and her fellow conspirators manage to get their hands on Olrik and, using him as a guinea pig again, and with Mortimer in unwilling attendance, reactivate the Mega Wave. Unexpected discovery: the wave turns out to make contact possible with the occupant of the ship!

The higher echelons of the government, perfectly aware of that extraterrestrial presence in the heart of London, had been keeping it a secret. Banks and his men had been the first to discover it during the last war, with dire consequences for their mental health. The Prime Minister sides with his science advisor, Professor Scaramian, who flatly opposes the destruction of the spaceship. Blake, however, disregards them and, with help from Mortimer, and especially from Olrik, obliterates the vessel. Afterwards, the colonel, once again the victim of cerebral manipulations, promptly joins Major Banks and his men at Bedlam Hospital.

Orpheus – such is the codename given to the ship.
Is it the only one of its kind, though?
Has the threat truly been eliminated?

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ON THIS RAINY AUTUMN NIGHT, THE PACE OF THE CITY SLOWS DOWN CONSIDERABLY. A DAMP FOG BLURS THE OUTLINES OF BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS ALIKE ...



... AND A STRANGE SILENCE REIGNS OVER THE STREETS, HARDLY DISTURBED BY THE RUMBLE OF PASSING CABS OR THE FOOTSTEPS OF A HURRYING COUPLE ...



THE CLOCK ON THE CORNER OF GREAT RUSSELL STREET STRIKES THREE IN THE MORNING. DESPITE THE LATE HOUR, AN APARTMENT REMAINS LIT ON THE TOP FLOOR OF AN IMPOSING BUILDING.



ITS OCCUPANT, PROFESSOR SCARAMIAN, HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN A LIVELY TELEPHONE CONVERSATION FOR A WHILE NOW.



I know. The destruction of Orpheus I was an absolute disaster. Don't worry, though ...



THE CONVERSATION ONCE AGAIN TOUCHES ON THE WRECKED ALIEN SPACESHIP AT THE HEART OF LONDON. IT APPEARS IT WASN'T THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND.

... we've evacuated the pilot of Orpheus VII. He was the only survivor. The other ships were either nonoperational or damaged.

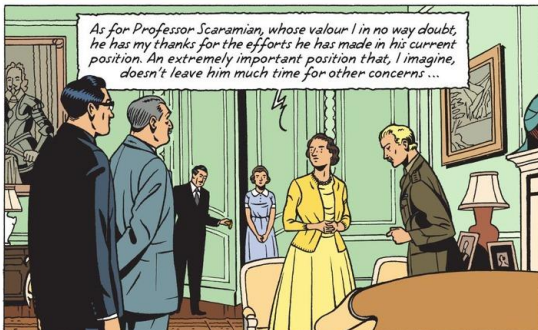
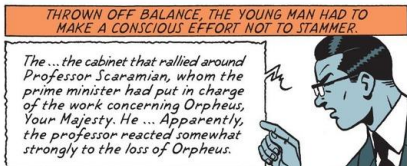


My teams are doing a good job and we're making progress, but Captain Blake insists on pursuing the investigation of Orpheus I ... Wasn't he supposed to be ...



The queen herself stepped in?! Goodness! That's unfortunate! I'd hoped for more secrecy. How did it happen? Can you tell me more?





THE AUDIENCE CONCLUDED, BLAKE AND SIR CHARLES LEFT THROUGH THE RIGHT WING OF THE PALACE. THE TWO MEN WERE OBVIOUSLY RELIEVED.

Well, you certainly fared well in there! So, you played rugby too?

Oh, I haven't touched a ball in a long time.

I should have paid closer attention to young Deskitt. He has the prime minister's ear.

As well as Professor Scaramian's, it seems.

Let's not underestimate the professor. He wanted your head and nearly got it ...

I must admit I'll feel better once the Orpheus case is closed. But I still need some answers before I can reach a conclusion ...

How far have you got, exactly?

Unfortunately, the main witness in the case is rather unreliable ...

His madness seems incurable. What he went through aboard the Orpheus must have thrown his nervous system completely out of gear.

Colonel Olrik? Is he still locked up in Bedlam Hospital?

We're trying to retrace his steps since he came back to London ... forcing me to reconnect with a past I'd put out of my mind ...

Oh, yes! Egypt – the Great Pyramid business, right?

Mortimer thinks that's where we should start. Reconnect with that time, reconstruct events, understand what happened ... He regularly visits the colonel to try to get some words, some sort of ... coherent thought, out of him.

A rather pointless endeavour, I fear.

You don't know Mortimer. Once he gets a notion in his head, it's hard to make him let go.

I'm all for it, to be fair. Give me back Olrik sound in mind and body, so I can put him away once and for all!

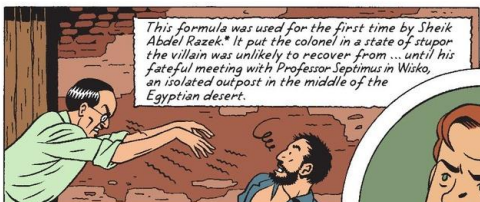
UNFORTUNATELY, SIR CHARLES'S WISHES AND REALITY DO NOT SEEM TO MESH, FOR THE SITUATION IN BEDLAM HOSPITAL HASN'T CHANGED MUCH ...

... DESPITE THE JOINT EFFORTS OF DR SOPRIANSKI AND MORTIMER, WHO NOW WANTS TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM WITH A NEW APPROACH. A SURPRISING APPROACH, TO SAY THE LEAST ...



You want to use an esoteric formula that might trigger a reaction in my patient?! Surely you're joking?!

Not really.



This formula was used for the first time by Sheik Abdel Rasek.* It put the colonel in a state of stupor the villain was unlikely to recover from ... until his fateful meeting with Professor Septimus in Wiko, an isolated outpost in the middle of the Egyptian desert.

*SEE THE MYSTERY OF THE GREAT PYRAMID



I was in grave danger. I didn't stand a chance against the Yellow M. I was about to die when, moved by some instinct, I used the formula. Immediately, the colonel fell back - collapsed, even.



As you know, the professor turned him into a human guinea pig. The colonel seemed lost forever, until I found him again as the infamous Yellow M, in Septimus's laboratory.



You know the rest. Septimus perished and the Yellow M escaped. Olrik had recovered his free will and disappeared in the city - until I met him once again in a Southwark warehouse.



I'd like to remind Olrik that, in effect, he sacrificed himself to save us from Orpheus. I believe he deserves another chance.

A chance ... A formula ... Have we fallen so low, then?



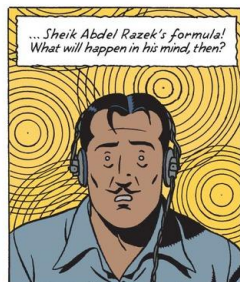
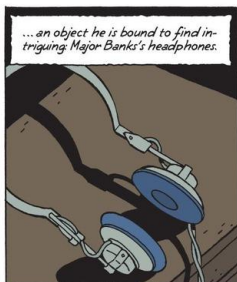
But, what do we have to lose, after all? I'll put your formula down to entertainment. Our patients need it too. I can't refuse the colonel what I would allow others. How do you plan to proceed?

Well, we need to surprise him. Shock him.

Every night, Olrik joins Major Banks and his unit, to chant with them the same litany.



Then a nurse takes him back to his own room. He's given a sedative to help him get to sleep quickly. Let's imagine that, one night, the colonel finds on his bedside table ...





A PHRASE REPEATED BY THE COLONEL, WHO'S JUST LEFT HIS ROOM AND STOPPED IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE FACILITY'S TALL WINDOWS ...

... AND TAKEN UP BY MAJOR BANKS'S ENTIRE UNIT ...



AND SO, IN THE LAST HOURS OF THAT NIGHT, THE PHONE RINGS IN THE PARK LANE APARTMENT WHERE OUR TWO FRIENDS LIVE.

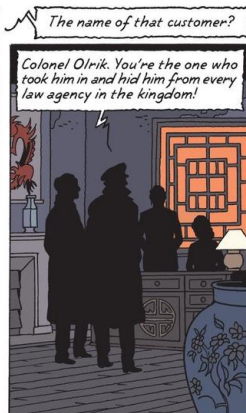


IN A FEW WORDS, MORTIMER EXPLAINS THE SITUATION TO HIS OLD FRIEND.



MEANS THAT BLAKE INTENDS TO MAKE UNRESTRICTED USE OF, IN ORDER TO DESTABILISE HIS TARGET - NONE OTHER THAN LILY SING!





HEARING THE NAME, LILY SING EXCHANGES A FURTIVE LOOK WITH HER SERVANT, BUT SHE CANNOT COMPLETELY HIDE A CERTAIN NERVOUSNESS.



ALMOST INSTANTLY, THOUGH, SHE RALLIES, REALISING THAT THE PATH BETWEEN LIES AND TRUTH WILL BE NARROW.



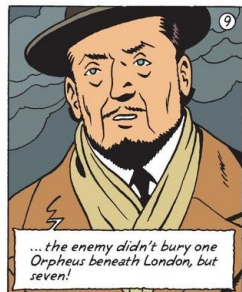
LATER THAT WEEK, PROFESSOR MORTIMER IS FINALLY MOVING OUT OF THE HOUSE HE HAS BEEN RENTING IN LEYTON ROAD, NEWHAM.



OF THE LABORATORY THAT OCCUPIED THE CELLARS, ONLY THE FOUR CENTRAL COLUMNS ARE LEFT.



IT'S TIME TO LEAVE. MORTIMER GIVES HIS LAST INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FAITHFUL NASIR.





AS MORTIMER REMAINS STUNNED, SCARAMIAN CONTINUES HIS EXPLANATION.



We're working on unravelling the mysteries of Orpheus VII - the only survivor. In complete secrecy. By telling you this, I place myself in your hands, at the mercy of your judgement ... and hope it won't be the same as your friend Captain Blake's.



Orpheus VII was piloted by a presence we managed to free from its confinement. It is now rebuilding its strength little by little, but we still haven't been able to communicate with it. That was when I thought of you ...



... and your use of the Telecephaloscope. It did establish contact with Orpheus I, after all.



Professor, what if I were to tell you that certain improvements made to the Telecephaloscope would allow you to better control its unwanted effects?



Besides, I'm afraid we don't have much choice ... as you'll see for yourself if you agree to come with me.



Which promptly caused mayhem across London! It was a terrible idea!



Ah, you see ... I have to go to Bedlam Hospital. It's rather important.



If I haven't managed to convince you in the next few hours, Professor, you will be taken anywhere you want. You have my word.



Well ... In that case ...

AND SO THE TWO MEN RETURN TO LONDON.



THE JAGUAR'S ENGINE ROARING, THEY HEAD FOR THE THAMES ...

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... THEN FOLLOW EAST INDIA DOCK ROAD TOWARDS POPLAR HOSPITAL ...

... BEFORE TURNING ONTO THE DOCKS OF ISLE OF DOGS.



A NEW WORLD THAT'S CLEARLY OUT OF REACH FOR ORDINARY MORTALS, AS MORTIMER QUICKLY CONCLUDES FROM THE MILITARY CHECKPOINT BARRING THE WAY.





A MESMERISED MORTIMER DISCOVERS THE FEVERISH BUSTLE AND EXTREME CONCENTRATION THAT FILL THE HOLD OF THE SHIP ... AN ATMOSPHERE THAT REMINDS HIM OF A DIFFERENT TIME, A DIFFERENT CRISIS, WHEN THE EMERGENCY WAS TO MAKE THE *SWORDFISH* A REALITY AND TURN THE TIDE OF A WAR THAT THREATENED TO CAST THE WORLD INTO COMPLETE DESTRUCTION.



SCARAMIAN, HOWEVER, STOPS BY A MAN WHO SEEMS BOTH SURPRISED AND EMBARRASSED AT MORTIMER'S PRESENCE.



AS A MOBILE CONSOLE IS WHEELED TOWARDS SCARAMIAN, DESKITT IS LOOKING ACUTELY UNCOMFORTABLE.

AND SCARAMIAN RESOLUTELY TURNS A KNOB.



You see, Professor, I'm being straight with you! Surely, you'll give me that.

That hardly means I'm happy with what happened!

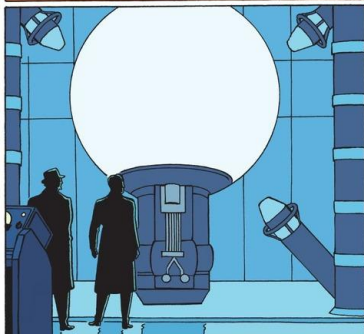


A situation it is time you discovered in full.



Deskitt merely followed my orders. But let us put this aside – the situation is too urgent.

INSTANTLY, THE SURFACE OF THE SPHERE FLASHES WITH AN ALMOST INCANDESCENT LIGHT, WHICH BEGINS TO DIM GRADUALLY ...



... UNTIL THE IMPOSING CREATURE KEPT INSIDE FINALLY APPEARS.



Professor, see the true form of Orpheus VII's captain. We removed him from his spacesuit.



We call him the Moloch!

WITH THESE WORDS, SCARAMIAN'S VOICE TAKES ON A TRIUMPHANT OVERTONE!



We're slowly ascertaining when he rests and when he is awake. His cellular energy increases daily, though, and our measuring instruments have detected brain waves. To put it in layman's terms, the Moloch is slowly recharging his batteries.

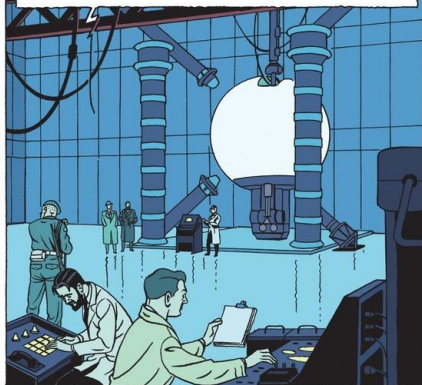


Incredible! You were telling the truth! You recovered a living entity from Orpheus ... An extraterrestrial!



I know how you feel. It's how I felt when we managed to take him out of his ship.

We haven't made much progress since, however. So, we're going to try a new experiment and release the Moloch's bonds, to assess his reaction to an open space ...



Don't worry, though. That space will be limited by the wall of the sphere. Still, he'll be able to stand up, take a few steps if he wants to ...

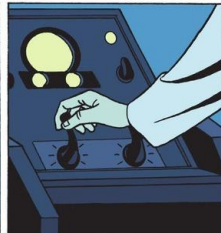


SCARAMIAN THEN TURNS TO HIS SENIOR ASSISTANT.

BRONSTEIN STARTS THE PROCEDURE TO RELEASE THE MOLOCH ...

Bronstein, begin Process B—but maintain the security measures.

Right away.



... WHOSE EYES OPEN AT LAST ON A WORLD UNKNOWN TO HIM.



NEXT, THE ELEMENTS LINKING HIM TO THE CONTROL PANELS MOVE AWAY FROM HIS BODY ...



RIISING TO HIS FULL HEIGHT AND POWER ...



... ALLOWING HIM TO STAND UP AND MOVE ...

... AS MORTIMER AND HIS HOSTS WATCH LIKE HAWKS.

... THE MOLOCH STRIKES THE WALL BEFORE HIM. A FIRST PUNCH ...



... SOON FOLLOWED BY INCREASINGLY STRONG OTHERS ...



... UNTIL A TINY WEB OF CRACKS APPEARS IN THE GLASS.



ALARMED, PROFESSOR SCARAMIAN URGENTLY BARKS AN ORDER AT HIS ASSISTANT.



We must stop him! Open the valves.

Yes, sir.



Incredible! I did not expect such raw strength! These walls are meant to stop a mortar shell!

I'm afraid he might have more surprises in store for you ...



... even though you can still control him for now.



INDEED, INSIDE THE CAGE NOW FLOODED WITH THICK GAS, THE MOLOCH JAGS, STAGGERS, THEN COLLAPSES ...

... EVEN AS PROFESSOR SCARAMIAN ADMITS HIS HELPLESSNESS TO MORTIMER.



Allow me to insist, Professor - I desperately need your help. You'll have access to every bit of equipment and data we have. We must find a common language between his world and ours - it's crucial!



You're talking about this as a done deal ... You opened Pandora's Box, and now, you're asking me to study its contents. What if those contents turn out to be a curse for mankind?

Then we will close the box and destroy the contents.



I have your word?

I don't have much choice any more, Professor. I'm staking my career on a throw of the dice.



Hmm ... As a French poet put it, a throw of the dice never will abolish chance. And I fear chance had no part to play in the Moloch's presence among us.



I do not read French poets.

I must admit they're not as good as ours. Keats simply has no equal.



Professor, the Moloch has been reconnected. But we noticed something worrisome.



!! What is it?

BRONSTEIN LEADS THE TWO SCIENTISTS BACK TO THE SPHERE, POINTING AT THE CRACKS.

A GLYPH APPEARS CARVED INTO THE GLASS, AS IF BORN OF THE TINY RUPTURE CAUSED BY THE MOLOCH'S ONSLAUGHT.



THAT EVENING, IN A CABIN SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR HIM, MORTIMER GETS TO WORK, HIS APPOINTMENT AT BEDLAM HOSPITAL NOW A DISTINCTLY SECONDARY CONSIDERATION. THE PROFESSOR IS NEVER ABLE TO REJECT THE CHALLENGE POSED BY SCIENCE ... AND WHAT HIDES BEHIND SCIENCE.

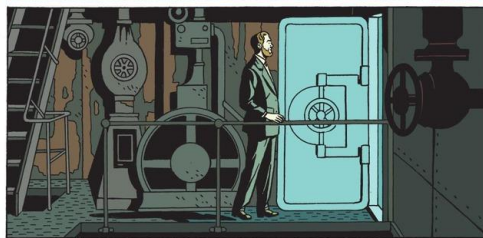
BEHIND THE INSCRUTABLE FACE OF THE MOLOCH, WHO SEEMS TO BE BIDDING HIS TIME ...

... A TIME THAT MORTIMER'S INSTINCT WHISPERS WILL BE TRAGIC. GNAWING DREAD RISES LIKE HEAT FROM THE HOLD OF THE OLD FREIGHTER ...



... DRIVING THE PROFESSOR TO LEAVE HIS CABIN AND HEAD DOWN BELOW ...

... WHERE STIFLING SILENCE REIGNS AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT.



A FEW DAYS HAVE PASSED. AT A REQUEST FROM THE BUDDY MORTIMER, BLAKE PAYS A VISIT TO DR SOPRIANSKI, WHO IMMEDIATELY GIVES HIM A NOTE.

Here! Tell me what you make of it ...

I found this sheet of paper at the foot of our patient's bed. It appears the inner world in which the colonel is struggling left us a new message. All we have to do now is understand what it means - I must confess I have no idea ...

They look like hieroglyphics ... but I imagine you've already checked.

Oh, absolutely. And those characters have no meaning, according to even the most distinguished Egyptologists I contacted. That said, they still indicate a desire to communicate on the colonel's part that I find interesting.

The formula uttered by your friend Professor Mortimer undeniably unlocked in the patient's mind a door to his conscious. To get there, though, the colonel strayed to those undecipherable symbols - it's up to us to guide him back towards a more suitable language.

Blake is about to leave the note on the doctor's desk, but Soprianski stops him.

No, do keep it. It's only a copy.

Next time he visits our patient, I'll ask Professor Mortimer to use his strange incantation again.

Horus's formula? I must confess I was sceptical, but Philip was right. I can only approve his action.

What about you? Is your investigation progressing?

I've found some new information. I stand a good chance of finding Lady Rowena.

It's true we haven't seen her at Bedlam in a long time, which I regret. She used to help us financially. We'll miss her contributions.

I understand.

I'll let you know as soon as I hear something.

But, as he walks across the grounds, our friend douses his optimism. There is still much he needs to know to close the Septimus case.

Everything depends on Lady Rowena. Will she fall into the trap I'm laying for her? I'd be a fool to underestimate her.

Suddenly, a voice derails his train of thoughts.

We have reason to be hopeful, don't we?

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IT'S MAJOR BANKS,
WALKING SERENELY
TOWARDS HIM.



Professor Mortimer's
not with you?

Uh ...no. I'll be seeing
him soon, though.

Excellent. In that case, would
you mind giving him important
news?

Not at all.

The colonel has confirmed it:
sanctuary is denied. We have
the means to do so.

!!
By what
means?

I cannot tell you more. We
must remain vigilant, though.
The enemy is coming, but we
will push him back at the last
moment – even if it means
sacrificing ourselves, one
and all!

I see.

No, you don't! No one can!
Except for the colonel. He's
managed to remain in contact.
He's ready to talk. Do you
understand?

Uh ... I would
truly love to.

FORTUNATELY FOR BLAKE,
A NURSE APPEARS TO TAKE
THE MAJOR BACK.

It's time to go inside, Mr Banks.

BLAKE, IN EQUAL PARTS
ASTONISHED AND DISMAYED,
WATCHES THE MAJOR WALK
AWAY. FACED WITH THE MAN'S
LIKELY IRREVERSIBLE MADNESS,
THE CAPTAIN FEELS UTTERLY
POWERLESS.

Poor old chap!
How long can he
hold on like this?

Even though, in his eyes, we're the ones not doing our part.
We're the ones who don't understand.

BLAKE HASN'T SEEN EVERYTHING YET, THOUGH. A LITTLE FURTHER,
SEVERAL FORMER SOLDIERS, NECKS CRANED TO LOOK FIXEDLY UP
AT THE SKY, BEGIN THE USUAL CHANT ANEW.

Sanctuary denied!

Sanctuary denied!

AND BLAKE HIMSELF CANNOT HELP BUT LIFT HIS GAZE
TO THAT SKY STILL EMPTY OF ANY VISIBLE THREAT.



IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, MORTIMER DOESN'T STEP OFF THE PATH. HE'S TRYING TO FIND SOME APPLICATION OF THE TELECEPHALOSCOPE TECHNOLOGY THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE MOLOCH, BUT IT'S NO EASY TASK.

SUDDENLY, THE DOOR OF HIS CABIN SWINGS OPEN, REVEALING A DISTRAUGHT BRONSTEIN.

AS AN ALARM BEGINS BLARING ...

... MORTIMER GUESSES THAT A MAJOR INCIDENT HAS OCCURRED.



Professor! Come, quick!



Everything happened so quickly! The night shift was about to take over when we heard a sort of explosion.



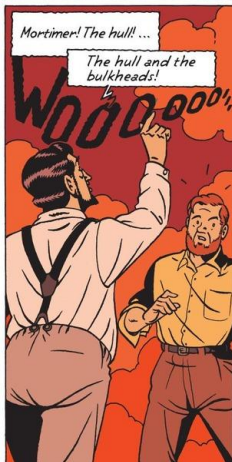
The Moloch?



See for yourself!

By Jove!!

AT THAT MOMENT, PROFESSOR SCARAMIAN ARRIVES, ON THE EDGE OF PANIC.



Mortimer! The hull! ...

The hull and the bulkheads!



Look!

STUNNED, MORTIMER DISCOVERS THE MOLOCH'S CAGE SMASHED, THE WALLS SHATTERED TO PIECES, AS IF A HURRICANE HAD BROKEN FREE FROM INSIDE.



NOW, ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE WALLS, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, THE GLYPHS SUMMONED BY THE MOLOCH APPEAR!





The Moloch?!



We're looking for him. He can't have escaped! Every way off of the *Patma* is rigorously guarded.



INDEED, FROM THE HOLD TO THE UPPER DECK, THE SEARCH FOR THE MOLOCH INTENSIFIES ...

... BUT AFTER A SLEEPLESS NIGHT, THE FAILURE IS OBVIOUS: THE FUGITIVE IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.



We've searched every cabin, every dark corner. No one's caught even the slightest glimpse of him, which seems unlikely considering his size and general appearance.

HEARING THOSE LAST FEW WORDS, MORTIMER SPEAKS UP.

Don't put any trust in that appearance. The Orpheus travellers have the ability to alter it. Remember the devastating effects of the Septimus Wave, which turned ordinary citizens into empty shells – simple vehicles for a force that was beyond them and manipulated them.

Between the moment when the cage exploded and the time the *Patma* went on full lockdown, could any of your men have left the ship?

It's possible.

Make a list. One of them could be the Moloch!

You ... You're not serious? That would mean the Moloch ...



... is free to roam around London. Yes, Scaramian, that's exactly what we should be afraid of!





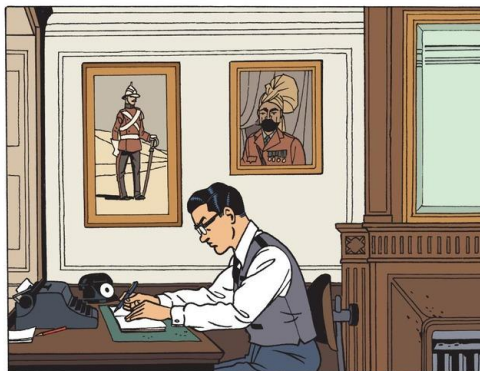
He can lose himself in the crowd, walk down any road, or take refuge inside any apartment in a neighbourhood where no one would look twice at him ...

Hello? ... Oh, it's you, Scaramian. Yes, yes ... I know. I heard the bad news.



Yes, I can see why you're worried. Should I tell the prime minister? ... I believe we should remain discreet ...

... SOME IDEA THAT DRIVES HIM TO FILL THE PAGES OF A NOTEBOOK OPENED BEFORE HIM.



I have a report to finish, but let's meet tomorrow. Early? No, that's not a problem ...



AND DESKITT HANGS UP, HIS FACE SCRUNCHED UP AS IF CAUGHT IN SOME OBSESSION ...

A report? What report was that again? Oh, yes ...

COMPULSIVELY. WITHOUT PAUSE. UNTIL EVENING.

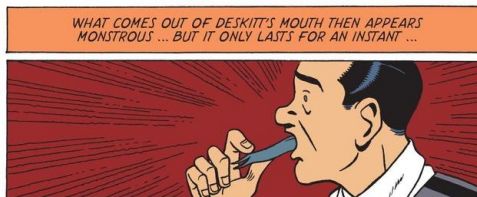


UNTIL A PAIN IN HIS THROAT FORCES HIM TO GET UP.

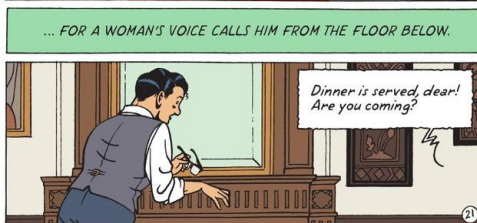
Can't breathe!



It's unbearable!



WHAT COMES OUT OF DESKITT'S MOUTH THEN APPEARS MONSTROUS ... BUT IT ONLY LASTS FOR AN INSTANT ...



Dinner is served, dear! Are you coming?

... FOR A WOMAN'S VOICE CALLS HIM FROM THE FLOOR BELOW.

THE CALL IS MUNDANE, BUT THE MAN DOESN'T APPEAR TO KNOW HOW TO REACT. HE LOOKS AROUND, HESITATES ...



... BEFORE FINALLY WALKING OUT, LOCKING THE OFFICE AND HEADING DOWN THE STAIRS.



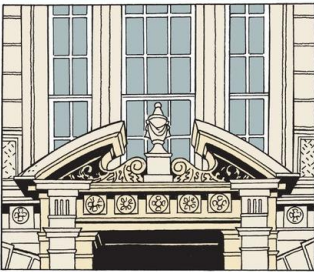
THE NOTEBOOK IN WHICH HE'S BEEN WRITING IS LEFT ON HIS DESK, COVERED IN HIEROGLYPHS ...



... THAT SEEM TO HAVE SOMEHOW BEEN PROJECTED ONTO THE WALLS, VISIBLE TO ALL YET STILL INDECIPHERABLE.



THAT EVENING, AN IMPORTANT AUCTION IS TAKING PLACE AT CHRISTIE'S, IN ST JAMES'S. RICHARD PRINCE'S RUNAWAY NURSE HAS REACHED ITS HIGHEST PRICE EVER, AND THE ORIGINAL COVER OF EDGAR P. JACOBS'S SECRET OF THE SWORDFISH HAS SOLD FOR THREE TIMES ITS INITIAL VALUE.

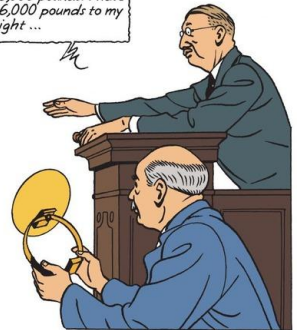


IN THE ROOM, WHERE THE MOOD IS SOMEWHAT CONTEMPLATIVE, BLAKE IS KEEPING A LOW PROFILE. HE'S WAITING FOR THE NEXT LOT: THE DISC PROFESSOR SEPTIMUS WORE ON HIS FOREHEAD AND WHICH IS PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC AT LAST.



ONCE AGAIN THE BIDDING TURNS FRANTIC, AND EVERYTHING HAPPENS FAST.

16,000 pounds! I have 16,000 pounds to my right ...



AT THE LAST MOMENT, A GENTLEMAN NOT FAR FROM BLAKE WINS THE AUCTION FOR AN AMOUNT VASTLY SUPERIOR TO ITS ESTIMATED VALUE ...



... AND SOON FILLS IN THE FORMS THAT ALLOW HIM TO TAKE HIS ACQUISITION WITH HIM.



THE MAN TAKES OFF IN A CAB ...



... UNAWARE THAT BLAKE AND MILLOVICH ARE TAILING HIM.



LEAVING ABERLINE ROAD ...



... THE TAXI DRIVES THROUGH POORLY LIT NEIGHBOURHOODS ...



... NEAR REGENT'S CANAL ...



... UNTIL IT EVENTUALLY STOPS IN FRONT OF A ONCE-GRAND VILLA IN THE SUBURBS.



THE GENTLEMAN HEADS TOWARDS THE VILLA ...



... WHEN, SUDDENLY ...



THE MAN HESITATES, BUT MILLOVICH STEPS FORWARD, AND THE PISTOL IN HIS HAND IS ENOUGH TO SWEEP AWAY ANY PROTESTATION.

WITHOUT FURTHER ADDO, THE GENTLEMAN TURNS AROUND AND SCARPER.



I'd leave it at that if I were you. Don't worry: I will deliver this into the right hands.

Poor fellow. Won't be easy to find a cabbie to get home around here.



A little exercise is excellent for your health, Millovich. Let's not feel sorry for him - he did avoid other unpleasantness much worse than a bit of walking.





The sort of unpleasantness waiting for us behind this door?

I'm afraid so. Though everything's possible – the best and the worst.



THE DOOR OPENS AS SOON AS BLAKE RINGS THE BELL.

Sorry to bother you, Captain Francis Blake, M/S. I have a package for you.

!?

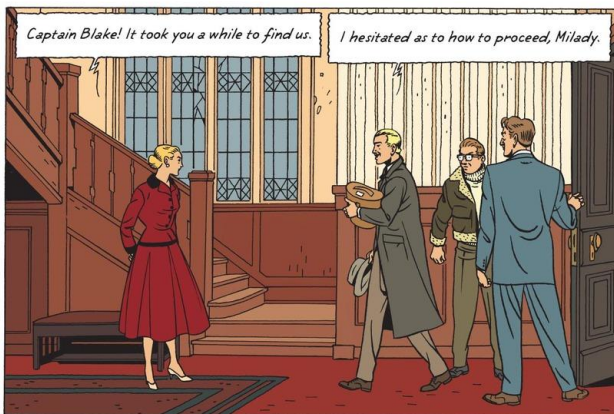


Unless it's for Lady Rowena. I'll wager she isn't far ...



AS IF TO CONFIRM BLAKE'S SUSPICIONS, A WOMAN'S VOICE CALLS OUT ...

Let them in, Evangelly.



Captain Blake! It took you a while to find us.

I hesitated as to how to proceed, Milady.



Really? Every policeman in the kingdom's been looking for us since the Septimus business, but you hesitated?



Mind you, that's understandable ...



What is the government blaming us for, after all?

Not turning Olrik over to us. You chose instead to use him as a test subject in your rather questionable experiments.



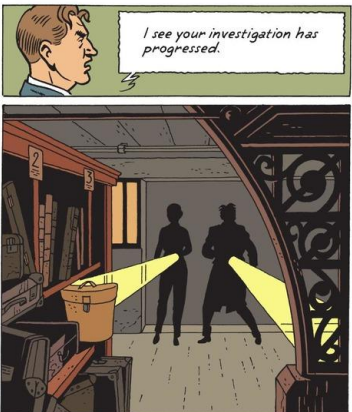
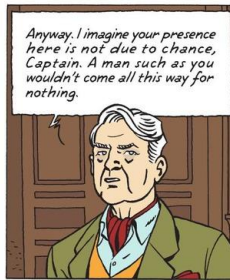
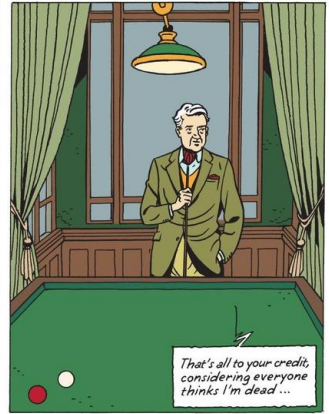
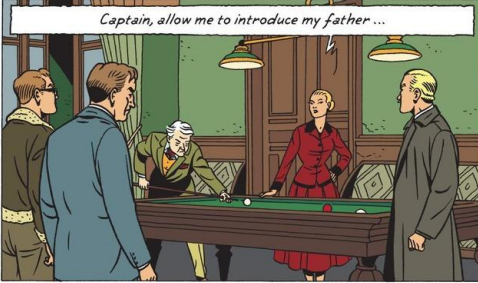
When you activated the Mega Wave, you awakened old demons that were waiting in slumber, forgotten, in the darkness where they should have rotted until the end of time!

AT BLAKE'S WORDS, LADY ROWENA TAKES HER GUESTS TO ANOTHER ROOM.



Demons that the colonel had to face and fight! He didn't come out of it unscathed – he's lost his mind.

!! So? Since when does the colonel's health matter to you? I thought he was your sworn enemy!





An object you used as bait to track down my daughter.



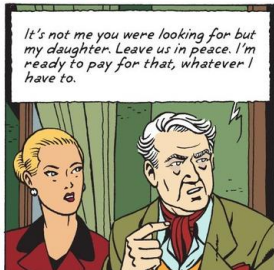
I learnt from a common acquaintance of ours, Lily Sing, that Lady Rowena hadn't left the city. I hat she'd sought refuge with her father. The problem was that you no longer appeared on the population registers, sir.



Appropriately so for a dead man, don't you think?



A dead man playing sponsor and making large donations to Bedlam Hospital... I figured my chances of finding you were good.



It's not me you were looking for but my daughter. Leave us in peace. I'm ready to pay for that, whatever I have to.



Let's take this to the sitting room. It'll make the discussion easier. Rowena, bring us some of that single malt I like so much.



A single malt, huh?

A Lagavulin, yes. But I don't believe my father invited you.

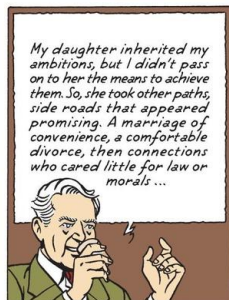
COMFORTABLY ENSCONCED IN SOFT ARMCHAIRS, SIR ALFRED SPARK AND HIS GUEST BEGIN TESTING THE WATERS, WHILE ENJOYING THE WHISKY THEY HAVE BEEN SERVED.



I love my daughter, Captain. I don't want her caught and crushed in that nasty Septimus business. What is she guilty of, after all? So little.



That's your point of view - not mine.

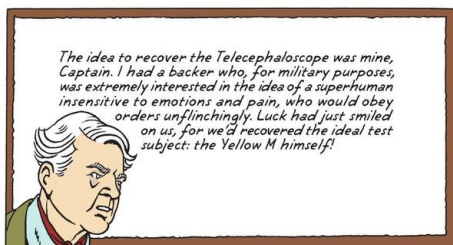


My daughter inherited my ambitions, but I didn't pass on to her the means to achieve them. So, she took other paths, side roads that appeared promising. A marriage of convenience, a comfortable divorce, then connections who cared little for law or morals ...

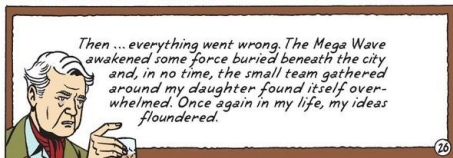


In my days, we would probably have called it 'slumming'. Associating with scoundrels. Not unexpected, of course - she is, after all, the daughter of a scoundrel! At least that's how I was viewed back then.

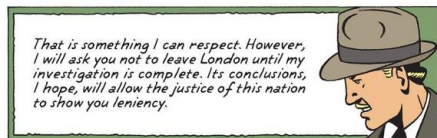
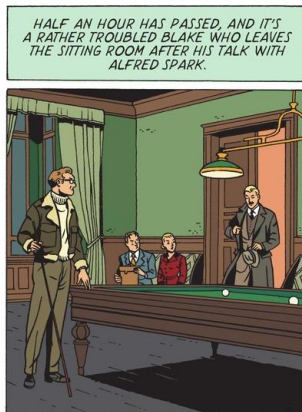
I'm not judging you, Sir Alfred. I'm listening.



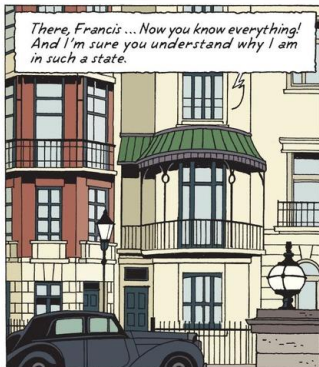
The idea to recover the Telecephaloscope was mine, Captain. I had a backer who, for military purposes, was extremely interested in the ideas of a superhuman insensitive to emotions and pain, who would obey orders unflinchingly. Luck had just smiled on us, for we'd recovered the ideal test subject: the Yellow M himself!



Then ... everything went wrong. The Mega Wave awakened some force buried beneath the city and, in no time, the small team gathered around my daughter found itself overwhelmed. Once again in my life, my ideas floundered.



THE NEXT DAY, IN PARK LANE, BLAKE SEES MORTIMER AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL DAYS.



There, Francis ... Now you know everything! And I'm sure you understand why I am in such a state.



We need to find the entity that escaped from the Orpheus quickly, or I fear the worst.



And you're counting on Scaramian's help to do so?! A man I've always distrusted!!?



I have no choice. We can only get out of this together ... How, though?



NEITHER BLAKE NOR MORTIMER COULD IMAGINE THAT, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, SCARAMIAN HIMSELF IS PREPARING TO MEET DESKITT.

THE MEETING IS SET TO HAPPEN IN A PUB DOWN A CUL-DE-SAC IN SPITALFIELDS ...



... BUT NO SOONER HAS THE PROFESSOR SET FOOT INSIDE THAN HE REALISES THE TRAP HE'S WALKED INTO!



THE WALLS ARE COVERED IN MYSTERIOUS HIEROGLYPHS ...



... AND THE PLACE IS EMPTY. ONLY DESKITT IS THERE, SITTING IN THE BACK.

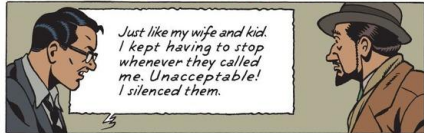


Professor! Over here!



Where is everyone?

Those nuisances ... I made sure they wouldn't disturb us.



Just like my wife and kid. I kept having to stop whenever they called me. Unacceptable! I silenced them.



!!



But I can't go home any more. I'm not stupid. Once they find the signs of my passage ... Because I'm only passing through, you see. You must understand that: I'm passing through ... Just long enough to ... and the mother-ship all the needed information.



! The mothership?!!



Yes. Orpheus Alpha. They need all the information ... Without exception! Or the targeting won't be sufficiently accurate.



Good heavens, Deskit! You ... You were on the freighter! You left just before we locked it down, didn't you?

Exactly.



You see why I'm glad we met today ... I need to shed my skin.



AS DESKIT PUTS HIS HAND OVER SCARAMIAN'S, THE PROFESSOR FLINCHES! IT FEELS AS IF HE'S BEEN TOUCHED BY A REPTILE - BY SCALY, COLD, LIFELESS SKIN!



You must understand! We don't have a choice!

FOR A LONG TIME, THERE'S NO MOVEMENT AROUND THE PUB ... UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF MR HARRIS AND MR BLOOM, TWO DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEES WHOSE TIMETABLE REVOLVES AROUND THE SWITCHING ON OF BEER PUMPS.



WALKING INTO THE PUB, THEY BUMP INTO SCARAMIAN, WHO DOESN'T EVEN SEEM TO NOTICE THEM!



Hey! Watch it!



Toffs! Think they can do whatever they like!

AFTER EXPRESSING THEIR DISAPPROVAL ...

... THE TWO FRIENDS DISCOVER THEIR FAVOURITE PUB'S NEW DÉCOR.



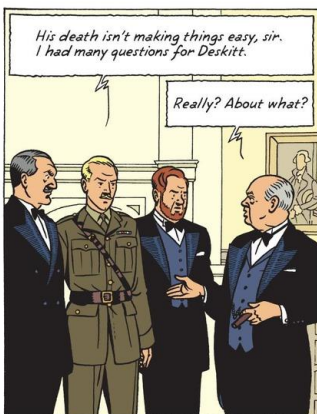
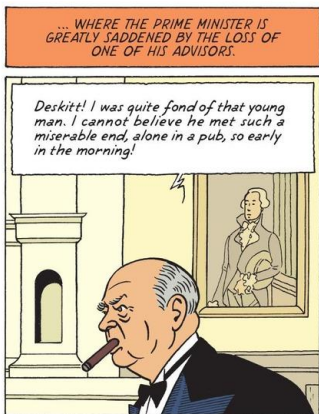
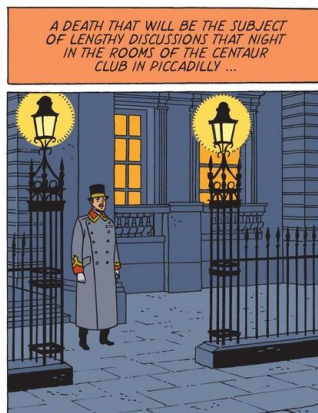
What's all this?!

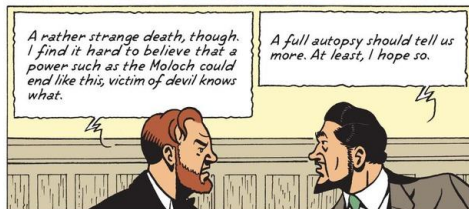
Did some bookie go mad?

BUT YET ANOTHER SURPRISE AWAITS ...



Hey! I'm ere ...





WHEN OUR TWO FRIENDS LEAVE THE CLUB, THE RAIN THAT HAS BEEN STEADILY FALLING ALL EVENING CONVINCES MORTIMER TO FLAG DOWN A TAXI.



AS HE IS ABOUT TO GET IN THE CAR, MORTIMER'S EYE IS CAUGHT BY SOMETHING.



HAVING RECEIVED NEW INSTRUCTIONS, THE TAXI BEGINS MOVING TOWARDS THE STRANGE BEAM OF LIGHT THAT RISES ABOVE THE ROOFS OF LONDON.



UNCERTAIN AT FIRST, THE CABBIE EVENTUALLY GETS HIS BEARINGS AND DRIVES TOWARDS TAVISTOCK SQUARE.

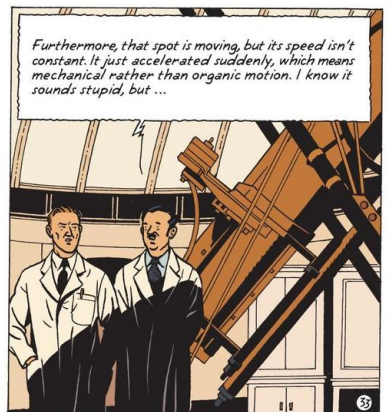
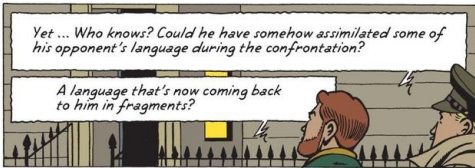


ON TAVISTOCK SQUARE, STUNNED, THEY DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE BEAM!



THE HOUSE WHERE PROFESSOR SEPTIMUS USED TO LIVE IS NOW COVERED IN THE SAME MYSTERIOUS HIEROGLYPHS THAT ARE SLOWLY SPREADING ACROSS THE CITY.







... A SIGNAL THAT, DISTRICT AFTER DISTRICT, IS BEING REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE CITY ...



... WHERE THE GLYPHS SPREAD BY THE MOLOCH ARE NOW COVERING WHOLE BUILDINGS!



AND THE PHENOMENON WILL ONLY SPEED UP ...



... AS THE MOLOCH NOW WANTS TO DISPLAY IN PLAIN VIEW WHAT HE HAD SO FAR BEEN TRANSMITTING ON PAPER.



AND EACH SYMBOL APPEARS TO ADD SOMETHING TO THE WHOLE - AN UNFATHOMABLE YET CLEARLY EXTENSIVE APPARATUS ...

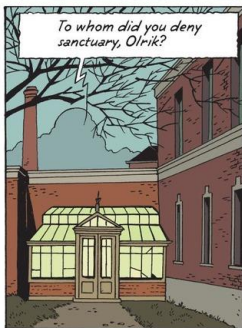


THE MOLOCH IS ALIVE!

THE WRETCHED DESKITT WASN'T HIS LAST INCARNATION. ONCE AGAIN, THE MYSTERIOUS PILOT OF ORPHEUS WALKS IN ANONYMITY, SAFE.



TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, AND WE FIND MORTIMER AT BEDLAM HOSPITAL....



To whom did you deny sanctuary, Olrik?

... WHERE HE'S TRYING TO BRING HIS OLD ENEMY BACK TO SANITY.



To the Moloch? Did you meet one of his avatars when you faced Orpheus?

The Moloch? Is that what you call him? Why not ... There are several of them. Scouts. They came to deliver their message, to open doors. They know everything about us. They're ready to dominate us, replace us. The Septimus Wave released them. They ask for sanctuary ...



... but they can't fool us. They speak of sanctuary, but it's about conquest, colonisation ...



So, we reject them. Horus rejects them. Let them stay far ... Far from us ...



Up there! Way up there, where space meets infinity! ...



This note ... You wrote it. You used the same symbols as the Moloch? ...



Oh, yes ... That's his alphabet. He uses these messages to call his people, the invaders! ... Merciless warriors. And once everything is said, when the order is given, they'll annihilate us.



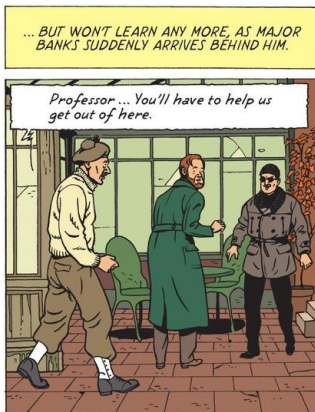
MORTIMER, HORRIFIED BEYOND WORDS BY WHAT HE'S HEARING, PASSES THE COLONEL ...



The ... The Moloch is calling his people to invade the Earth?!!

London first. It was here, in London, that Orpheus slept, buried deep.

... BUT WON'T LEARN ANY MORE, AS MAJOR BANKS SUDDENLY ARRIVES BEHIND HIM.



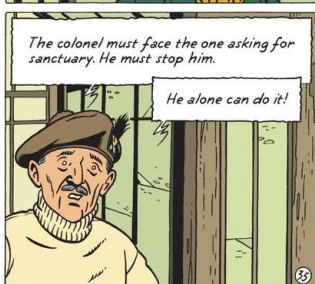
Professor ... You'll have to help us get out of here.

What do you mean?



The colonel must face the one asking for sanctuary. He must stop him.

He alone can do it!



THE ENEMY MOVES, AS IF TO INCREASE THE THREAT, A THICK FOG ENGULFS LONDON, LEAVING IT AT THE MERCY OF THE INVADER.



PERHAPS IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE ... IN AN OFFICE AT SCOTLAND YARD, BLAKE IS ONCE AGAIN QUESTIONING THE TWO WITNESSES WHO DISCOVERED THE LIFELESS BODY OF POOR DESKITT.

I'm afraid I must also report the death of the owner of your favourite pub. We found his body in the stockroom.

Old Bob? No! That can't be right!!! There was still some stout in the pumps!!!

You were the first people to enter the pub. Did you notice anything unusual - aside from the symbols written on the wall?

Huh ... They're all we could see! ... Sorta glaring, you know ...

Actually, we weren't the first ... There was already a patron coming out of the pub when we arrived!

A patron!! And you didn't think to mention him?!!



I have photographs of the victim's closest relations and co-workers. Is the patron one of them? Focus, please. This is important.

Sure it's important! We don't want the pub to stay closed too long.



THE TWO MEN CONCENTRATE ON THE PICTURES PROVIDED BY BLAKE.

Blimey! This lot looks like they wouldn't know a pint if it bit them!



WHEN, SUDDENLY ...

Look! It's him!

Oh, yes! No doubt about it! The sickly air of a man who's never touched a drop.

BLAKE GRABS THE PICTURE AND CANNOT HOLD BACK A GASP OF ASTONISHMENT.



Well ... We're not coppers.

I forget things fast. I hear it's good for you.



AN HOUR LATER, DESPITE THE FOG, SEVERAL CARS FROM THE YARD STOP IN FRONT OF PROFESSOR SCARAMIAN'S HOME IN GREAT RUSSELL STREET.



BLAKE QUICKLY OBTAINS ENTRY INTO THE BUILDING AND REQUESTS ACCESS TO THE PROFESSOR'S APARTMENT FROM THE STUNNED CONCIERGE.



But ... he's not home!

Do you know where he is?



No. The professor has been absent a lot lately. I just collect his post for him.



Pity, but we don't have time to waste. We must search the place!



I haven't been inside his place in a while.

No matter!

THE MEN OF THE YARD HAVE NO SOONER ENTERED THE APARTMENT THAN THEY DISCOVER THE SAME SCENE ...



... AS ENIGMATIC AND OMINOUS AS EVER!



AND WITHIN THE NEXT HOUR, BLAKE MANAGES TO CONTACT THE PRIME MINISTER AND REPORT THE LATEST INFORMATION DISCOVERED BY THE YARD.

... According to the latest results from the investigation, sir, Professor Scaramian was present in the pub at the time Deskitt died.



Scaramian! He spent time with the prime minister! We must warn the PM immediately.

Yes, sir. We'll get you a direct line to Downing Street.



Are you certain about this? ... Mind you, what's one more preposterous fact at this point?



Unbelievable! We're entering a time of fear and madness that reminds me of another ... As if it's all going to happen again!

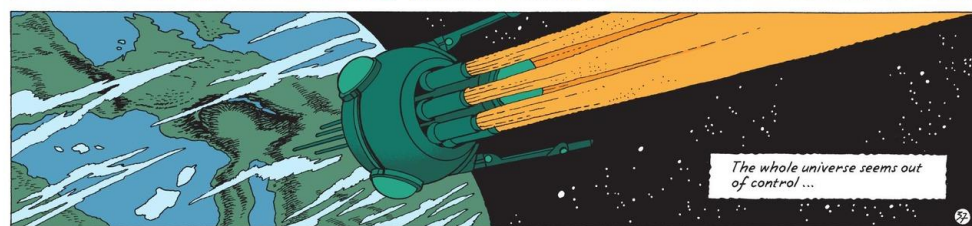


Unfortunately, I'm afraid I must confirm your fears, sir!

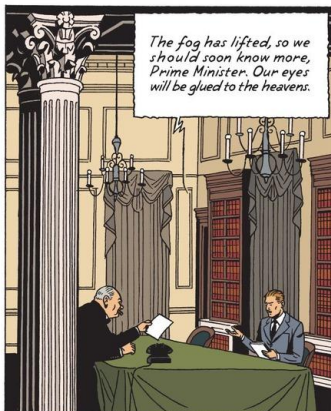


What do you mean by that, Neville? Speak plainly!

It's not just our world that's going mad.



The whole universe seems out of control ...



AS IF TO ILLUSTRATE PROFESSOR NEVILLE'S PREDICTIONS, A MAN IS STARING AT THE SKIES AS NIGHT FALLS OVER BEDLAM HOSPITAL.



LOOKING FOR A SINGLE MOTE OF LIGHT AMONG THE STARS, COLONEL OLRİK IS PREPARING TO FACE THE MOLOCH.



DRIVING THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CAPITAL, MARKED BY THE MOLOCH'S PASSAGE, THE MEN IN THE VAN CAN FEEL THE LONDONERS' CONCERN.



YET IN SOUTHWARK, ALL IS QUIET – A DECEPTIVE QUIET ...

... EVEN THOUGH THE WALLS OF THE WAREHOUSE'S ARE STILL CLEAR OF ANY SIGN OF THE MOLOCH.

You seem sure of yourself. Your recovery is spectacular!

... but Sheikh Abdel Razeq's formula lifted me from the darkness. My memories are back. Paradoxical, isn't it?

Hmm ... I'm delighted I could help.



I take it that was sarcasm.

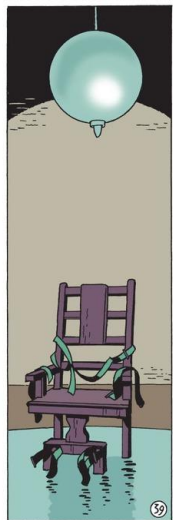
I'm not entirely certain. Either way, the situation is somewhat uncomfortable.

AFTER NAVIGATING A MAZE OF ROOMS AND CORRIDORS, THE TWO MEN ARRIVE AT PROFESSOR EVANGELY'S ABANDONED LABORATORY. LITTLE REMAINS OF THE EQUIPMENT, AS THOSE CONSOLES NOT DESTROYED WERE REMOVED BY THE INVESTIGATORS. BUT THE ARC GENERATOR STILL HANGS IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM.

A NOW UNUSABLE ARC GENERATOR ...

Uncomfortable, yes, because for you and your ilk I should spend the rest of my days in prison like a common criminal ... and a puppet, too! Which I am not and will never be!

If you say so.



SUDDENLY, THOUGH, AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR ENTERS THE LABORATORY.

Ah, gentlemen! Here you are at last! I was beginning to lose hope.

Evangelly! So, you were still in touch with your test subject, then?

I do not consider the colonel a guinea pig, Professor, but rather a scout sent to unexplored, hostile territories.

Really? And how do you expect to gain the upper hand without the Telecephaloscope?

I don't need that accursed machine! Evangelly, did you bring what I asked you?

Yes. Tuog had left us three vials of the drugs he used to give you.

Then you will give me all three in a single injection!

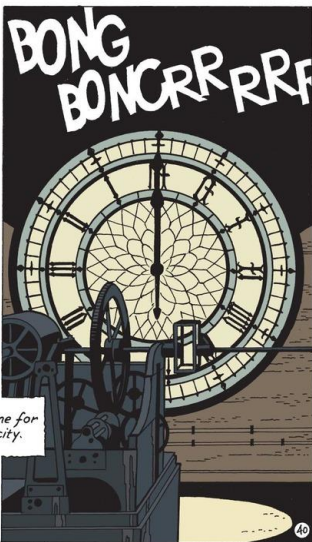
!! Are you mad?! Your heart won't take it!

Come now, Mortimer! Considering the enemy we are facing, this is no time for half measures.

I must be at the top of my form and potential. The Moloch has finished giving his people his instructions.

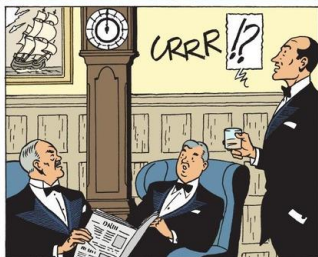
All he has to do now is to add his signature ... The key that opens space.

The time has come for him to take the city.



AND, IN FACT, TIME STOPS OVER LONDON. THE NEEDLES OF BIG BEN FREEZE IN THE MIDDLE OF STRIKING TWELVE.

EVERYWHERE, THE SAME PHENOMENON OCCURS.



WHILE THE CITY SENDS AN INCANDESCENT BEAM INTO SPACE, ONE LAST WAVE ...



... THAT'S IMMEDIATELY PICKED UP BY THE SPACESHIP NEARING EARTH ...



... ALL THE CLOCKS IN THE CAPITAL GRIND TO A HALT, ONE AFTER ANOTHER.



AND IN SOUTHWARK,
A SILHOUETTE APPEARS.



WALKING SWIFTLY, IT HEADS STRAIGHT
FOR THE WAREHOUSE IN WHICH PROFESSOR
EVANGELY'S LABORATORY LIES.



THERE, THE SHAPE OF SCARAMIAN
— FOR IT IS NOTHING BUT A SHAPE —
STOPS IN FRONT OF A BRICK WALL.



RAISING HIS HAND, HE PREPARES TO TRACE THE LAST GLYPHS ...



... THE LAST AND MOST IMPORTANT ONES!



TO COMPLETE HIS MISSION, ALL HE HAS TO DO IS ADD HIS SIGNATURE, THE SEAL THAT WILL AUTHENTICATE THE INSTRUCTIONS SENT TO SPACE.



THE MOLOCH SMILES.

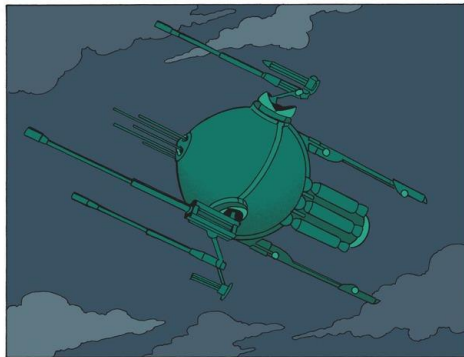


BUT, TO HIS ASTONISHMENT, NOTHING APPEARS ON THE WALL!



UP IN THE SKY, ORPHEUS ALPHA HAS REACHED THE END OF ITS JOURNEY AND STOPS ABOVE LONDON.

EVERYTHING SEEMS SUSPENDED IN TIME ...



TURRETS ARE DEPLOYED, CANNONS ARE AIMED. ITS FIREPOWER WILL LEAVE NO CHANCE FOR THE DESIGNATED TARGETS.



WITH A FINAL GESTURE, THE MOLOCH IS ABOUT TO SIGN HIS MESSAGE.



... A TIME FROZEN ACROSS THE ENTIRE CAPITAL.



FACED WITH THIS THREAT, THE OLD SURVIVAL INSTINCTS OF LONDONERS QUICKLY RESURFACE ...

... THEIR APPARENT CALM BARELY HIDING A GROWING ANGUISH.



AT SCOTLAND YARD, THOUGH, THE SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL. THE EMPIRE BENDS BUT DOESN'T BREAK!



To all units ... Suspect spotted ...

... Block 27, Southwark ...

On our way!



Is it Scaramian?

Yes, but make no mistake – it's just a disguise! And what's hiding behind it possesses formidable power.



AS IF TO PROVE BLAKE WRONG, THOUGH, THE MOLOCH SUDDENLY SEEMS TO BE FILLED WITH DOUBT, BAFFLED BY WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM ...



... WHEN THE SOUND OF A VOICE INTERRUPTS HIS THOUGHTS.



Sanctuary denied!

Sanctuary denied! ...



WITH A SIMPLE WAVE OF HIS HAND, HE OPENS THE DOOR TO THE WAREHOUSE FROM WHICH COMES THAT VOCAL DISRUPTION ...

... THAT ECHO GUIDING HIM TO A PARTICULAR SPOT ...

... WHERE OLRIK IS WAITING FOR HIM.



Sanctuary denied!

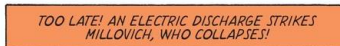
Sanctuary denied!

He's coming.



He's looking for me, because I have something he simply must get back. An element I took from the Orpheus.





IMMEDIATELY,
A TONGUE OF FLAMES
ENGULFS SCARAMIAN!
FOR A FEW SECONDS,
A HUMAN TORCH TWISTS
AND JERKS IN THE
INFERNO.



BLAKE RUSHES TO PROTECT MILLOVICH ...

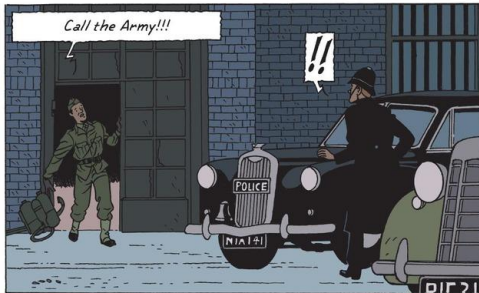
... BUT A SHADOW TAKES SHAPE,
WALKING OUT OF THE FIRE.

THE MOLOCH, IN ALL ITS
STRENGTH, POWER, AND
DETERMINATION!



Call the Army!!!

!!



AND AS THE ALARM IS RAISED ...

They must surround
the entire district!!

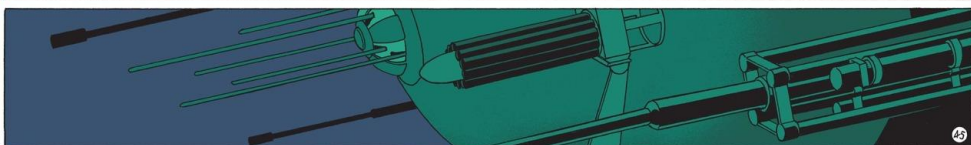


... A NOW MONSTROUS SILHOUETTE RESUMES HIS PROGRESS
TOWARDS PROFESSOR EVANGELY'S LABORATORY.

NOTHING SEEMS LIKELY TO STOP HIM. THE MOLOCH HAS
REACHED THE FINAL STAGE OF HIS MISSION. SOLE SURVIVOR
OF ALL THE SCOUTS SENT BY THE ENEMY.



AN ENEMY WHO AWAITS ONLY ONE FORMULA, ONE SIGNAL, TO RAIN DEATH AND DESTRUCTION DOWN ON LONDON!



THE VERY FORMULA THAT WAS INTERCEPTED AND STOLEN BY OLRIK, WHO IS NOW PREPARING FOR THE FINAL CONFRONTATION.

There's no time to waste, Evangely! Come and stand under the arc generator.

It's the only safe place.

The arc generator? ... I don't think that's a good idea!

EVANGELY HESITATES, ALL THE MORE SO AS THE ARC GENERATOR ...

EVANGELY, CLEARLY UNEASY, TRIES TO RUN.

Evangely!!! Forget him!

... APPEARS TO COME BACK TO LIFE! HARNESSSED LIGHTNING STRIKES THE GROUND, TRACING A CIRCLE AROUND MORTIMER AND HIS OLD ENEMY.

Professor, I need your help. I cannot do this alone. Remember the Chamber of Horus in the pyramid ... Remember Guinea Pig ...

You ... You can't be serious?!

We have a formula of our own we can use against him.

We must stay within the circle. It's the only thing protecting us from deadly rays - it, and the formula!

Look!

Get ready, Professor!

IT SEEMS ALL OVER FOR POOR EVANGELY. THE MOLOCH ENTERS THE LABORATORY, HOLDING HIS VICTIM ALOFT ...

... AND THROWING THE BODY FROM THE TOP OF THE STAIRS ...

... AGAINST THE INVISIBLE WALL RAISED BY THE ARC GENERATOR AROUND MORTIMER AND OLRIK!

?!
46



You've recreated Septimus's electromagnetic curtain?!

Better! ...



... This curtain is also a mirror that can send the message back where it came from. The rays will be sent back into space.

The formula ... Keep Sheik Abdel Razek's formula in your mind!

THE MOLOCH STRIKES THE INVISIBLE WALL WITH HIS FIST, BUT NOTHING HAPPENS.



Don't worry. The mirror will hold.

THE MOLOCH APPEARS TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD AS MUCH. POWERLESS, HE CHANGES HIS APPROACH ...

... AND BEGINS TO DRAW SYMBOLS ON THE ELECTROMAGNETIC CURTAIN!



Professor!

IT'S THE MOMENT OLRİK HAS BEEN WAITING FOR ...



By Horus, stay!

... AND ON THE WALL, THE FORMULA APPEARS IN ITS ANCIENT REPRESENTATION.



DISORIENTED, THE MOLOCH LOOKS ON AS THE SYMBOL APPEARS BEFORE HIS EYES, LIKE A SEAL PLACED ON A DOOR.



THE EFFECT ON HIS OWN WRITING IS IMMEDIATE, AND IT BEGINS TO FADE AWAY ...



A PHENOMENON THAT ISN'T CONFINED TO THE LABORATORY ALONE.





THROWN OFF
BALANCE BY THE
SUDDEN REVERSAL
OF FORTUNE, THE
MOLOCH OPTS TO
RETREAT ...

... WHILE, EVERYWHERE, HIS MESSAGE IS
SLOWLY ERASED, GLYPH AFTER GLYPH ...



... AND TIME SUDDENLY STARTS
FLOWING AGAIN.



THE EFFECT HAS SPREAD TO THE ENTIRE
CAPITAL AND SEEMS IRREVERSIBLE.



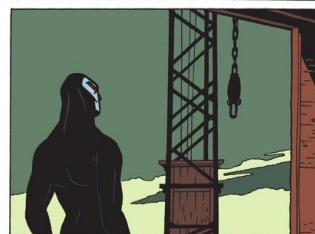
IN THE NASCENT DAWN, AT BEDLAM HOSPITAL,
DELIVERANCE HAS COME AT LAST TO MAJOR
BANKS' AND HIS MEN. ALL ARE FINALLY FREE
OF THE CURSE THAT AFFLICTED THEM.



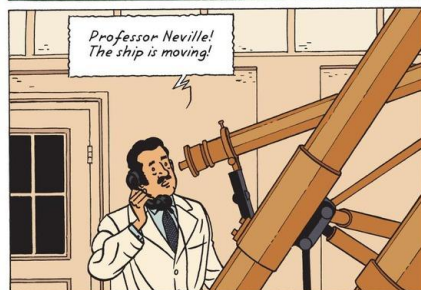
MEANWHILE, IN SOUTHWARK,
THE MOLOCH COMES OUT OF
THE WAREHOUSE.



ALL THE WIND HAS GONE OUT FROM HIS SAILS.
HE LIFTS HIS HEAD TOWARDS THE HEAVENS ...
WHERE THE ULTIMATE WAVE, THE BEAM OF LIGHT
SENT FROM LONDON, WEAKENS AND FADES ...



COMMUNICATION WITH ORPHEUS ALPHA, STILL UNDER
OBSERVATION BY ASTRONOMERS, IS BROKEN ...



... AND IN THE SKY, A LIGHT STREAKS, LEAVING FOREVER!



MEANWHILE, BLAKE HAS JOINED A GROUP OF SOLDIERS WHO HAVE BEEN BUSY LOADING AN IDLING LORRY.



Packed full of explosives, sir!

Is the lorry ready?

THE MOMENT OUR FRIEND HAS BEEN WAITING FOR ARRIVES AT LAST.



Hurry up! He's coming our way ... alone!



Let's give this another try.

I have to warn you, sir ... We moved fast and didn't have time to calculate the exact yield of the explosion. I cannot guarantee your safety ...

Well, I'm afraid we don't have much choice!



Good luck, Captain!

THE SOLDIERS MOVE BACK, DRIVEN BY BLAKE, THE HEAVILY LADEN LORRY SLOWLY GETS UNDERWAY.



PICKING UP SPEED, IT BARRELS TOWARDS THE MOLOCH, WHOSE SILHOUETTE HAS APPEARED AT THE END OF THE ALLEY ...



THE MOLOCH SIMPLY WAITS, WITHOUT TRYING TO SAVE HIMSELF.



HIS EYES HAVE LOST ALL INTENSITY. SOMEWHERE INSIDE OF HIM, CIRCUITS AND CONNECTIONS ARE SHUTTING DOWN.



For England!

EVERYTHING WILL BE OVER IN SECONDS.

AND BLAKE JUMPS OUT!





THE MOLOCH DOESN'T MOVE.
IT'S ALL OVER
FOR HIM ...

THE LORRY SLAMS HEADLONG INTO HIM AND EXPLODES IN A MASSIVE FIREBALL ...



... FROM WHICH A FEW FANTASTICAL VISIONS EMERGE FOR A MOMENT ...



THE BLAST HAS BEEN
FELT ALL THE WAY INSIDE
THE WAREHOUSE.

!! Did you hear that?

Yes. I think that
marked the end
of the Orpheus
scouts. Look ...



... Everything's vanished! The threat,
and the protection!



Thanks to you.

Your help was crucial.
I was able to replace
the Moloch's signature
with Sheik Abdel Razeq's
formula, thus cancelling
the orders sent to the
invading force.



The powers of that formula
will never cease to amaze
me ... It can destroy you as
easily as it can heal you.

Sometimes, the
poison is also
the cure.





A FEW WEEKS HAVE PASSED IN LONDON.
ONE FINE MORNING AT ST MARY'S HOSPITAL ...



... BLAKE AND MORTIMER ARE VISITING MILLOVICH, WHO IS MIRACULOUSLY
RECOVERING FROM THE DAMAGE INFLICTED BY THE MOLOCH.



So, we came close to disaster
but avoided it! Our city always
survives, doesn't it?

Thanks to you, gentlemen!



I was told you were doing better, Mr Millovich.
I'm delighted to see it's true.

Y... Your
Majesty!



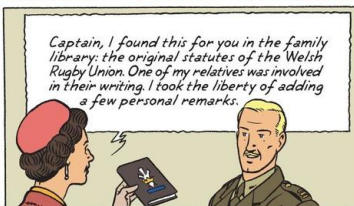
And you, gentlemen, as steadfast and
true as ever, I see.

We are where we must be,
Your Majesty.



Professor Mortimer, I'd like to hear more about
that Telecephaloscope Dr Septimus used. Would
you come to Buckingham to tell me and a select
few about it?

Any time Your
Majesty wants.
I am at Your
command.



Captain, I found this for you in the family
library: the original statutes of the Welsh
Rugby Union. One of my relatives was involved
in their writing. I took the liberty of adding
a few personal remarks.

Originally, we'd thought of
a medal. I hope you won't
feel wronged.

Your Majesty!



SMILING, THE QUEEN TAKES
HER LEAVE AS DISCREETLY
AS SHE ARRIVED.

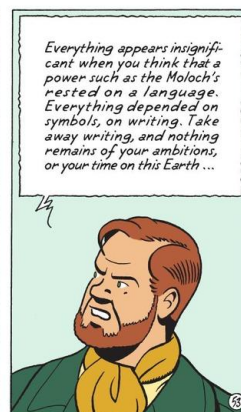
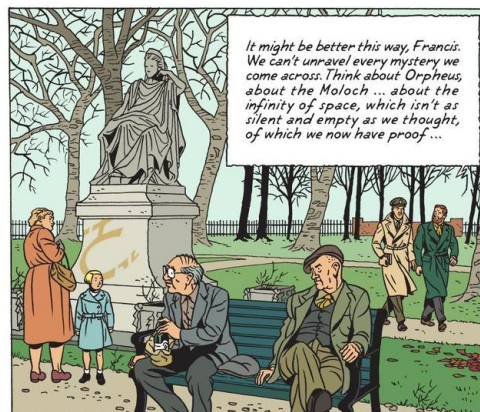
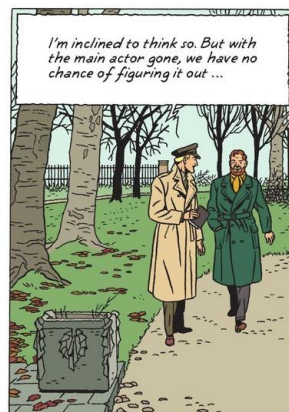
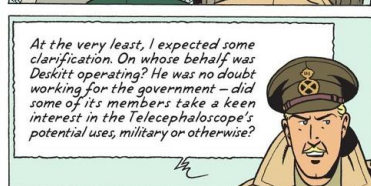
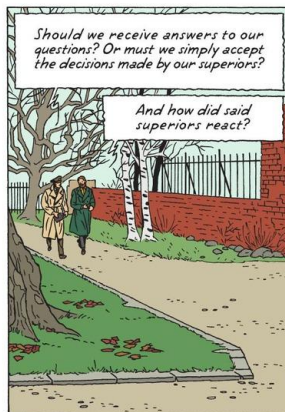
That being said, Captain, Colonel Olrik has once
again escaped! I await your report on the matter.



The queen!

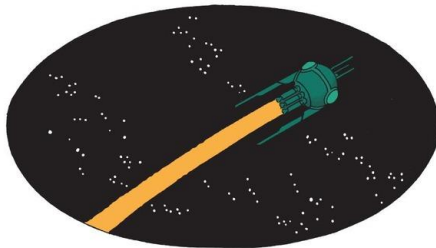
The queen
knows my
name!







Though, to make it perfection, I'll also add some fine tobacco ...



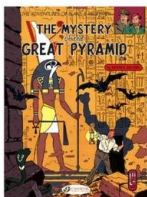
... and think about the Orpheus. Where did it come from? What planet? Nothing is ever entirely over, Francis.



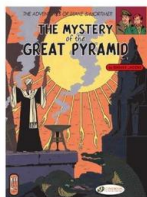
THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER



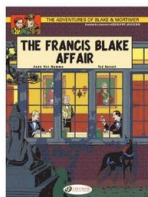
1-The Yellow "M"
EDGAR P. JACOBS



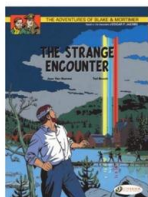
2-The Mystery of the Great Pyramid Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



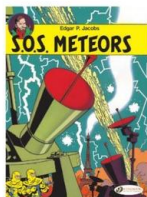
3-The Mystery of the Great Pyramid Part 2
EDGAR P. JACOBS



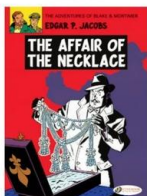
4-The Francis Blake Affair
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



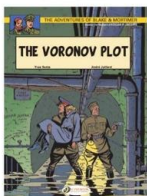
5-The Strange Encounter
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



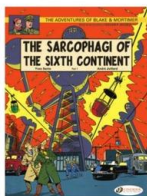
6-S.O.S. Meteors
EDGAR P. JACOBS



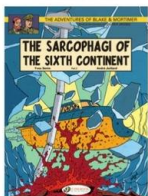
7-The Affair of the Necklace
EDGAR P. JACOBS



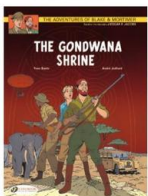
8-The Voronov Plot
SENTE - JULLIARD



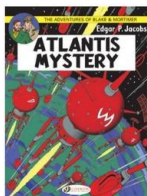
9-The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent Part 1
SENTE - JULLIARD



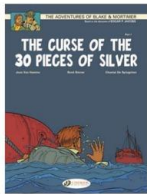
10-The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent Part 2
SENTE - JULLIARD



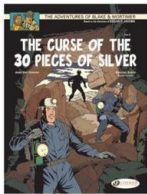
11-The Gondwana Shrine
SENTE - JULLIARD



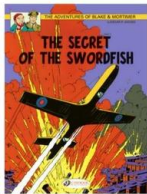
12-Atlantis Mystery
EDGAR P. JACOBS



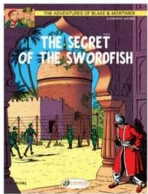
13-The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver Part 1
VAN HAMME - STERNE - DE SPIEGELER



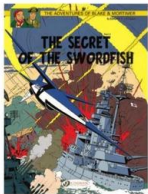
14-The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver Part 2
VAN HAMME - AUBIN - SCHREDER



15-The Secret of the Swordfish Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



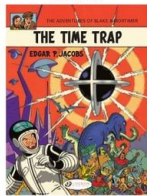
16-The Secret of the Swordfish Part 2
EDGAR P. JACOBS



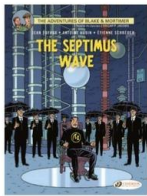
17-The Secret of the Swordfish Part 3
EDGAR P. JACOBS



18-The Oath of the Five Lords
SENTE - JULLIARD



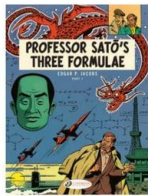
19-The Time Trap
EDGAR P. JACOBS



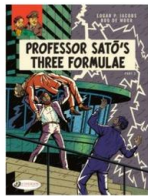
20-The Septimus Wave
DUFALX - AUBIN - SCHREDER



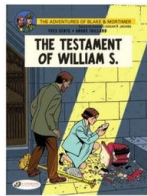
21-Plutarch's Staff
SENTE - JULLIARD



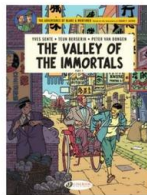
22-Professor Sato's Three Formulae
Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



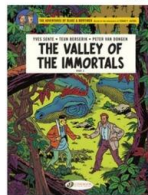
23-Professor Sato's Three Formulae
Part 2
JACOBS - DE MOOR



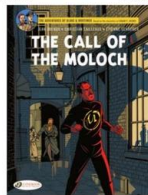
24-The Testament of William S.
SENTE - JULLIARD



25-The Valley of the Immortals
Part 1
SENTE - BERSERIK - VAN DONGEN



26-The Valley of the Immortals
Part 2
SENTE - BERSERIK - VAN DONGEN



27-The Call of the Moloch
DUFALX - GAULLEUX - SCHREDER

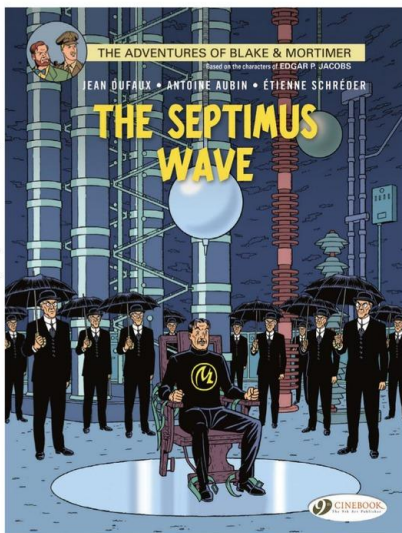


THE SEPTIMUS WAVE

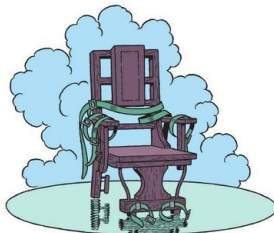
Jean Dufaux • Antoine Aubin • Étienne Schréder

Based on the characters of **EDGAR P. JACOBS**

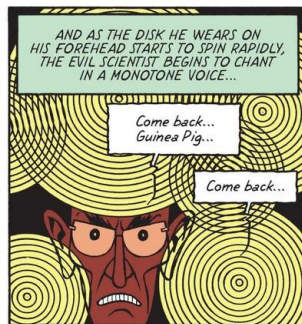
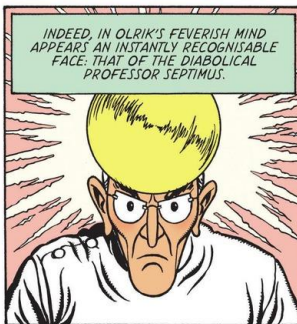
© Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud-Lombard s.a.)



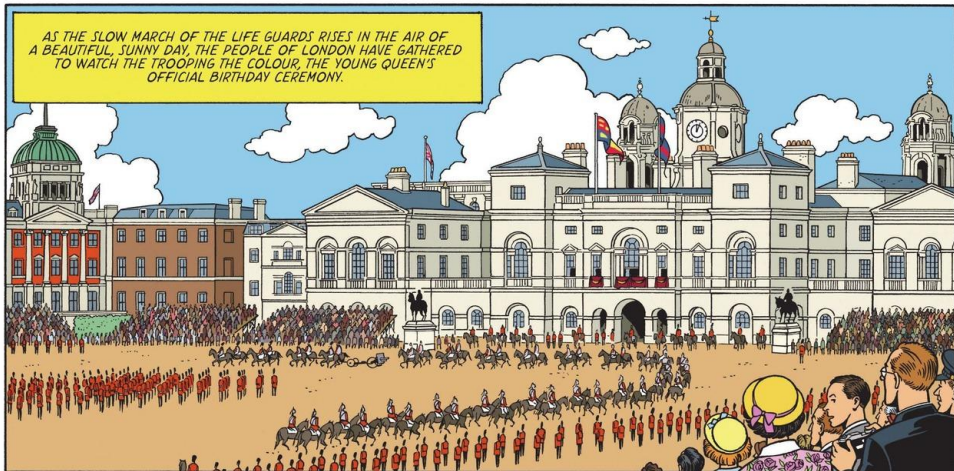
It's been several months since the events of *The Yellow M*, but the evil of Professor Septimus still echoes around London. Important figures of the capital's jet set come together around the questionable values the mad scientist defended. Orlík is forced to resort to opium in order to forget he was *guinea pig*. As for Mortimer, he too is trying, albeit for more humanist reasons, to revive certain aspects of Septimus's work — to Blake's extreme concern...



Jean Dufaux is a noted author who has created many series throughout his long career. Among them: *Murena*, *Lament of the Lost Moors*, and, more recently, *Crusade*. Sometimes called "Jean the Prolific," at ease with practically every style, his most famous heroine remains *Jessica Blandy*. **Antoine Aubin** learnt to read with *Tintin* and worked for publisher Hachette-Disney for many years, before being chosen by Dargaud to take over from René Sterne on *Blake and Mortimer*. **Etienne Schréder** is a veteran artist and colourist in his own right who has worked in comics and cinema and collaborated with many renowned artists.



AS THE SLOW MARCH OF THE LIFE GUARDS RISES IN THE AIR OF A BEAUTIFUL, SUNNY DAY, THE PEOPLE OF LONDON HAVE GATHERED TO WATCH THE TROOPING THE COLOUR, THE YOUNG QUEEN'S OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY CEREMONY.

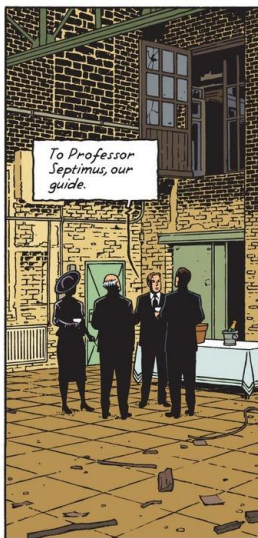


BUT ON THE OTHER BANK OF THE THAMES, BEHIND THE STARK FACADE OF A SOUTHWARK WAREHOUSE, SOME HAVE CHOSEN SHADOW OVER LIGHT, WHISPERS OVER CHEERS, APOCALYPSE OVER CELEBRATION.

My lady, gentlemen, on this dawn of a new era, I propose a toast.



To Professor Septimus, our guide.



PRESENT ARE LIEUTENANT MCFARLANE, FORMER OFFICER ATTACHED TO THE OFFICE OF CHARLES GARRISON, COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND HEAD OF SCOTLAND YARD.

To Septimus!



LADY ROWENA, INCONSOLABLE YOUNG WIDOW, WHOSE SKILL LIES IN SELECTING HEALTHY FORTUNES IN AILING HUSBANDS...

To Septimus!



BANKER OSCAR BAILEY, WHO RAISED HIS FORTUNE OVER THE EXPLOITATION OF THE MASSES - AS WELL AS THE TILMANSTONE COAL MINES IN KENT.

To Septimus!



AND PROFESSOR EVANGELY, FIRED FROM THE PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE FOR ENGAGING IN QUESTIONABLE PRACTICES ON CERTAIN PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL DISORDERS.

To Jonathan Septimus!



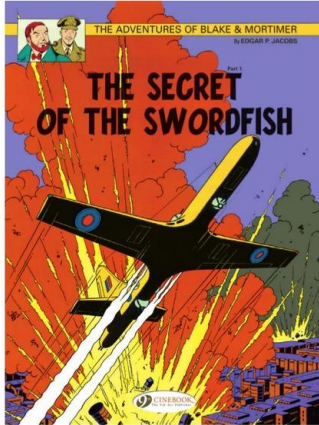
ALL APPEAR UNITED AROUND A SINGLE OBSESSION, AN IDEA ROOTED IN THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST. FOR THE PAST IS MORE TO THEIR TASTE THAN A PRESENT THEY CONSIDER TOO PUSILLANIMOUS FOR CONCEITED MINDS SUCH AS THEIRS...

And to our Great Work.

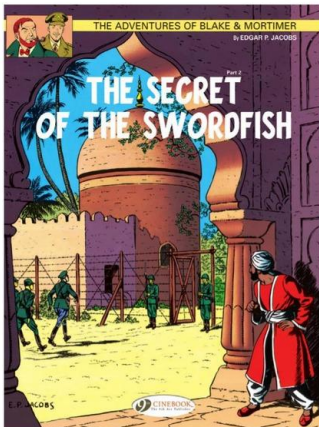




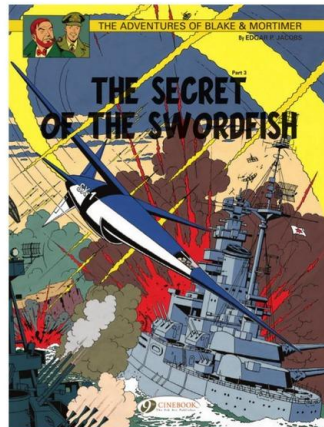
THE SECRET OF THE SWORDFISH



The Incredible Chase



Mortimer's escape



SX1 Strikes Back

THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURES OF FRANCIS BLAKE AND PHILIP MORTIMER—AND THEIR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH OLRİK.

In a past almost, but not entirely, like ours, the world lives in dread of a new power, an empire centred in Tibet and led by a megalomaniac. When the inevitable attack comes, it destroys all opposition, and capital cities across the planet are left burning. But, in Great Britain, Professor Mortimer, inventor of a mysterious weapon named the Swordfish, and his friend and protector Captain Blake, have escaped the destruction, and must make their way to a secret base...



JACOBS

1946, the Swordfish, starting point of a masterful work

Article taken from the book: *The World of Edgar P. Jacobs* (Le Lombard publishers)



When, in 1946, daring publisher Raymond Leblanc decided to launch the magazine *Tintin*, Hergé called upon the services of his friend Jacobs. The latter proposed a medieval series, 'Roland the Bold', for which he wrote a complete script, but the project was discarded because there were already too many period costumed adventures in the magazine's layout.

Jacobs then proposed *The Secret of the Swordfish*, a futuristic series that was to open the cycle of Blake & Mortimer's adventures. The story was a great success with the public right from the start, and impressed many comic creators.

This episode was a reflection of the terrible conflict that had just ended with the terrifying destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Jacobs considered it a somewhat separate work. It was obvious that the Tibetan conquerors were really transposed Japanese, but page after page, Jacobs displayed unparalleled originality.

Regarding the technical side of dialogues, he eventually learnt, after some understandable trial-and-error, the proper placing of speech bubbles (the original publication of *The U Ray* didn't include any), eventually arriving, by the end of the second episode, at a chef-d'oeuvre of narrative figuration.

The unbalance between the end of the story and its beginning was such that, for its publication in graphic novel format, the author reworked the first 18 pages, even bringing them down to 17. Thus the lead-in became equally strong as the conclusion and, considering the end result, we can only agree with Jacobs' decision.

The Secret of the Swordfish reprised the idea of a submersible plane, which had first been seen at the beginning of the 20th century and was made popular by Jules Verne in *Master of the World* (1904). During the interwar period, the idea was used in the comic strip 'Tim Tyler's Luck' by Lyman Young, and even by Walt Disney with Mickey Mouse's 'submarplane'. There would however be two major differences between those stories and the *Swordfish*: the exemplary solidity of the script, and above all the design of the robotic machine, whose aerodynamic profile wasn't about to become outmoded any time soon.

To create the world-liberating machine, the conscientious Jacobs even hesitated between several devices, one of which was no less than an outstanding foreshadowing of the Polaris system! But in the end, it was the extraordinary white and blue Swordfish that won out – and still fascinates us today. This was a far cry from the approximate inventions that had come before Jacob's creation.



Cover of *Tintin* magazine (November 28, 1946)

© Edgar P. Jacobs

Correspondence between Claude le Gallo and Edgar P. Jacobs, November 20, 1967

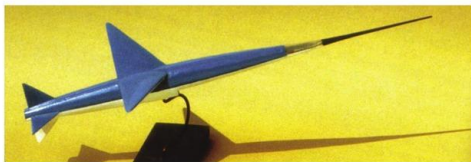
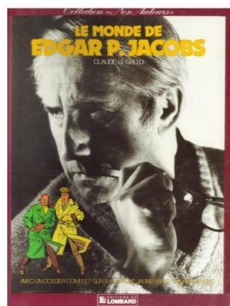
In order to allow for the revenge and liberation of the nations defeated by the Yellow Empire's lightning attack, I had to find, besides a base of operations (the secret base of the Strait of Hormuz), a weapon that would be nigh invulnerable as well as powerful enough to neutralize the invaders' enormous war machine, but also sufficiently small and easy to handle to evade their hunt. Which immediately excluded any idea of a surface base or vehicle. Indeed we had no, or almost no, documentation on recent weapons – and next to nothing concerning nuclear weapons, rockets, radars, etc... We were still stuck with conventional armament and propeller planes... My first idea had considered four potential projects:

- A supersonic plane with a nuclear armament
- A ballistic missile submarine (that launched while submerged)
- An underwater missile base (at the bottom of a lake)
- A supersonic plane operating from an underwater base

I'd eventually opted for the submarine plane but, although it was very daring at the time, it still remained a classic type of vehicle – aside from having a jet engine, being designed for remote control and flying out of the water. Its behaviour once in the air was more or less that of a 'stuka'. Strangely enough, where I'd extrapolated with wild abandon in *The U Ray*, now the fear of going beyond credibility, coupled with my dislike for American-style science-fiction, had me positively paralysed. Until, in the course of discussing that situation with an old friend, he swept aside

all my scruples and technical objections, encouraged me to move past this sudden faintheartedness and charge straight ahead into full-blown science-fiction (or rather what we still believed to be science-fiction!). In short, he managed to convince me, and then there was the Swordfish!

Once I'd accepted the principle, I launched into frenzied work. Keeping in mind, for the airframe, the different environments through which it would be called to perform – air and water – I made a series of very rough sketches and fairly quickly arrived at a silhouette that, to my eyes, seemed to meet the desired performance. Starting from there, I made a working drawing – plans, front view, side view, etc... – that I submitted for review to an expert in naval and aeronautical matters. Having concluded that no major impossibilities stood in the way of carrying out such a project, he built a model to scale. When I saw it, a name spontaneously came to my mind: swordfish! It had actually amply deserved that name, since I'd drawn inspiration from that fish's silhouette (as well as that of the shark) to create, from an aerodynamic standpoint, my machine's outline.



Model of the Swordfish
© Photos: Philippe Biermé

It is interesting to note that at the time that flying submarine was designed, a short-winged, slender-fuselage plane was not at all 'in'. On the contrary, the trend was all 'flying wings' and tail-less aircraft. I actually made a personal version of such an aircraft with Colonel Orlík's *Red Wing*. I'll mention also in passing the creation, still for the same story, of an Imperial fighter nicknamed the 'Flying Shark'. Seven years later, in 1953, the Americans unveiled an extraordinary plane, considered the most advanced of the time: the Douglas X3, which had a silhouette almost identical to that of the Swordfish. Finally – supreme accolade – 20 years later, the Americans announced the opening of an evaluation program between 44 manufacturers for a flying submarine project! And the US Navy clarified that this was in no way some science-fiction project; it deemed the existing technology sufficient to launch into the study of such a machine at that time.



DOUGLAS X3
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Some technical details: the Swordfish was designed to be remote-controlled, and it was only under the pressure of events and running out of time that the heroes Blake and Mortimer, risking everything, took the extreme chance of flying the partially equipped aircraft themselves, taking the place of the remote-control mechanism.

The use and working of the controls are absolutely identical whether in flight or underwater. In flight, the engine's fuel feed is provided by the air. When diving, the air intake shuts off in contact with the water and automatically switches the circuit over to the oxygen tanks.

Note: the aircraft's nose drops off for pilot ejection.

Weapon load: infrared-guided, nuclear-tipped rockets and missiles.

Edgard Félix Pierre Jacobs (1904–1987), better known under his pen name Edgar P. Jacobs, was a comic book creator (writer and artist), born in Brussels, Belgium. It has been said of Jacobs that he didn't remember a time when he hadn't drawn.

Jacobs assisted fellow Belgian Hergé (Georges Prosper Remi) in the recasting of Hergé's *Tintin in the Congo*, *Tintin in America*, *King Ottokar's Sceptre* and *The Blue Lotus* for book publication. He also contributed directly to both the drawing and storylines for the Tintin double-albums *The Secret of the Unicorn/Red Rackham's Treasure* and *The Seven Crystal Balls/Prisoners of the Sun*.

When the comics magazine Tintin was launched on 26th September 1946, it included Jacobs' story *Le secret de l'Espadon* (*The Secret of the Swordfish*). This story would be the first in the Blake and Mortimer series.

The characters of Captain Francis Blake, dashing head of MI5, his friend Professor Philip Mortimer, a nuclear physicist, and their sworn enemy Colonel Olrik became legendary heroes of the 9th art in the long-running series.

After Jacobs' death in 1987, Bob de Moor completed his unfinished last story. In the mid-1990s, the series was continued by the Jacobs Studios with new teams of writers and artists.



ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION		
1	1950	Le secret de l'Espadon, T1
2	1953	Le secret de l'Espadon, T2
3	1953	Le secret de l'Espadon, T3
4	1954	Le mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T1
5	1955	Le mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T2
6	1956	La marque Jaune
7	1957	L'énigme de l'Atlantide
8	1959	S.O.S. Météores
9	1962	Le piège diabolique
10	1967	L'affaire du collier
11	1971	Les trois formules du professeur Satø, T1
12	1990	Les trois formules du professeur Satø, T2 (Jacobs/De Moor)
13	1996	L'affaire Francis Blake (Van Hamme/Benoit)
14	2000	La machination Voronov (Sente/Juillard)
15	2001	L'étrange rendez-vous (Van Hamme/Benoit)
16	2003	Les sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T1 (Sente/Juillard)
17	2004	Les sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T2 (Sente/Juillard)
18	2008	Le sanctuaire du Gondwana (Sente/Juillard)
19	2009	La malédiction des 30 deniers, T1 (Van Hamme/Sterne/De Spiegeleer)
20	2010	La malédiction des 30 deniers, T2 (Van Hamme/Aubin)
21	2012	Le serment des cinq Lords (Sente/Juillard)
22	2013	L'onde Septimus (Dufaux/Aubin/Schröder)
23	2014	Le bâton de Plutarque (Sente/Juillard)
24	2016	Le Testament de William S. (Sente/Juillard)
25	2018	La Vallée des Immortels, T1 (Sente/Berserik/Van Dongen)
26	2019	La Vallée des Immortels, T2 (Sente/Berserik/Van Dongen)
27	2020	Le cri du Moloch (Dufaux/Cailleaux/Schröder)

CINEBOOK EDITION		
15	2013	The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 1
16	2013	The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 2
17	2013	The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 3
2	2007	The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 1
3	2008	The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 2
1	2007	The Yellow "M"
12	2012	Atlantis Mystery
6	2009	S.O.S. Meteors
19	2014	The Time Trap
7	2010	The Affair of the Necklace
22	2016	Professor Satø's Three Formulae, Part 1
23	2016	Professor Satø's Three Formulae, Part 2
4	2008	The Francis Blake Affair
8	2010	The Voronov Plot
5	2009	The Strange Encounter
9	2011	The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 1
10	2011	The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 2
11	2011	The Gondwana Shrine
13	2012	The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver, Part 1
14	2012	The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver, Part 2
18	2014	The Oath of the Five Lords
20	2015	The Septimus Wave
21	2015	Plutarch's Staff
24	2016	The Testament of William S.
25	2018	The Valley of the Immortals, Part 1
26	2019	The Valley of the Immortals, Part 2
27	2020	The Call of the Moloch

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MAGIC MAN

